

Spell Well to Know More

I can make an exhibit to explain a topic.

The Spelling Bee is a chance to build your vocabulary and your spelling know-how. These activities can help you prepare for the Spelling Bee. We hope you win, but even if you don't get to first place, you still gain. You will have a bigger vocabulary and more skills. The more you know about vocabulary and spelling the more you will be able to read and the better you will be able to write.

Part 1: Organize Your Learning

Count the number of topics and the number of days before the Spelling Bee at your school. Then figure out how you will study for the Spelling Bee.

Make a Spelling Bee Preparation Calendar. Week 1, you could plan to study all the *Beginning Words*. Or, you could plan to take a test on the *Beginning Words* during week 1 and work on any words you miss and the *Intermediate Words* during the first week. Then you could work on *intermediate Words* and *Advanced Words* for the rest of the time you prepare for the Spelling Bee.

Plan your spelling practice. Make a plan for each day. Here is an example:

Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Week-End
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make a Learning List of words you need to learn. To find those words, you can pre-read the list and look for words that are difficult to spell. Or take a pre-test. ✓ Write clue to spelling each word on your list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take Test. ✓ Study words you misspell. ✓ If you have just a few words to study, find more difficult words and add them to your Learning List. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take re-test on words mastered. ✓ Review words misspelled and their spellings. ✓ Review words you spelled correctly on the re-test. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take a re-test of words misspelled. ✓ Add more words to your Learning list. ✓ Write clues to spelling those words. ✓ Study clues and words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take a re-test of all the words you studied this week. ✓ Make a graph showing how many words you mastered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take all words mastered and words to study. ✓ Write sentences with the words. Try to fit two or more words in the same sentence. ✓ Practice for Monday's test. Review all your words.

Week 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Week-End
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take test on words from last week.. ✓ Make a Learning List of words you need to learn. ✓ Write clue to spelling each word you misspell. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take Test. ✓ Study words you misspell. ✓ If you have just a few words to study, find more difficult words and add them to your Learning List. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take re-test on words mastered. ✓ Review words misspelled and their spellings. ✓ Review words you spelled correctly on the re-test. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take a re-test of words misspelled. ✓ Find more words to practice. ✓ Write clues to spelling those words. ✓ Study clues and words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take a re-test of all the words you studied this week. ✓ Make a graph showing how many words you mastered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take all words mastered and words to study. ✓ Write sentences with the words. Try to fit two or more words in the same sentence. ✓ Practice for Monday's test. Review all your words.

Meet the standard:
 Check your work—is it
 ✓ complete?
 ✓ correct?
 ✓ clear?
 Exceed the Standard:
 Write what you learned by
 doing this project.

Part 2: How to Practice

There are many ways to practice your spelling. One way is to spend time with the words, figuring out how each one is spelled, remembering it. Just writing the word a number of times will not help much. You need to spend time thinking about the words, how they are spelled, and figuring out a way to spell them correctly. This section gives you a way to do that.

Practice Pocket

What is a Practice Pocket? It's a set of index cards or pieces of paper you make. It's a way to practice. It's a way to spend time with vocabulary.

Here is the way to make a Practice Pocket. Take a package of index cards or make your own. To make your own, take a sheet of paper. Fold it into 8 rectangles. Then tear it neatly so you have made your own index cards. These won't be as heavy as the index cards, but you will save money and be able to do more if you make your own kit.

Take an envelope—or make one by folding a sheet of paper in half, folding the edges at the side and top. Label your envelope with the topic of one list of words from the Spelling Bee.

Which words go into your Practice Pocket? The words you need to practice so you know how to spell them. To find those words, look through the list of words on the topic list. Which ones are hard to spell? Those are the words you put into your Practice Pocket. Follow these steps to practice.

1. Print the words you need to practice on in the index cards. Print one word on each card. Then put them in the envelope.
2. Take a sheet of paper. It is your own Spelling Guide. On it, you will list clues you think of to help you remember how to spell the words in your Practice Pocket.
3. One at a time, take the words from the envelope. Look closely at each of those difficult words. For each one, make a note about its spelling. Think of a way to remember that note. For example, for the word llama, you could note, llama Llama starts with two l's, and a llama has two ears. Of course lots of animals have two ears, but you'll remember the spelling of llama if you have a way to remind yourself about it. To help you remember that spelling even more, you can draw a picture with your note. Or you could write a clue that is part of the word itself. For llama, you could write, It has two a's and two l's.
4. Put your words back into your Practice Pocket.
5. Study your Spelling Guide.
6. Give the envelope to another person. Ask that person to read the words to you.

7. As you hear each word, print it on a sheet of paper.
8. Take the cards and check your spelling. For each word you spelled correctly, put a check mark on the card.
9. Put all the cards back in the envelope. Wait a few hours or a day and repeat steps 5 through 7.

Master Pack

When you spell a word correctly twice, then it gets two check marks.

Put words with two check marks into a Spelling Master Pack.

What's that? Take another envelope. Label it: **Spelling Master Words**. All the words you misspelled before and now can spell correctly go into that Master Pack.

Every day, review those words so you don't forget how to spell them. To help with that review, on the back of each card write a note to yourself about how to remember to spell it correctly. That's the same note you wrote on Your Spelling Guide. For your note, you can just write a few words or a phrase. For example, for llama you could write "two ears" –that would remind you about the two ls. Or you could draw a picture of two ears. You could just write 2 a's plus 2 l's. You're writing yourself a reminder.

Once a week, take a test on the words in the Master Pack. When you spell a word correctly, put one more check more. Put all the words with three check-marks into the Check-Back Pack.

Check-Back Pack

Make one more envelope. Call it the Check-Back Pack. It's the set of words you will use the days before the Spelling Bee to remind yourself about the words you have learned. Each week, review the words in the Check-Back pack.

Soon the Check-Back Pack will hold a lot of words. So you won't have time to take a test on all of them. You should include some of those words in a weekly re-test. Take them at random from the Check-Back Pack and include them in a test you ask another person to give you each week. That person will read the words aloud for you to write. Then check yourself. If you misspell a word from the Check-Back Pack, then it goes back into the Practice Pack.

Continue to Learn

You can use this system to learn other kinds of things. For example, you could use it to learn math facts or another language. It's a way you can organize facts you learn when you are learning a topic. Then you will have a collection of information you can use to study for a test and to write about that topic.

Part 3: Decoding Spelling

Phonics is the science of sound. It links letters to sounds.

Letter-Sound Links

In English, **b** always has the same sound. So does **z**. Other letters have different sounds when used with other letters. For example, the letter **g** has a “hard” sound in the middle of *luggage* and a soft sound at the end of that word. What makes the difference? The **e** that follows that last **g**. When **g** is followed by **e** it has a soft sound.

There are many different patterns like that. You can make sure you have a good working sight vocabulary and be a letter sound scientist. Look for patterns in the following words. They are some of the most frequently used words in the English language.

action	continue	exciting	planet
bought	determine	fraction	produce
caught	difficult	molecule	rhythm
century	division	necessary	solution
condition	elements	oxygen	substance
consonant	especially	paragraph	

In a dictionary, you will see a pronunciation key. That key shows how the word sounds. Make a pronunciation key for these words. Then check your key against the dictionary.

Meet the standard:
Check your work—is it
✓ complete?
✓ correct?
✓ clear?
Exceed the Standard:
Write what you learned by
doing this project.

Combining Letters and Chunking Sounds

When you find a word you don't know, you can figure out how to say it by "sounding it out." When you "sound out" a word, you remember the sounds that each letter makes. But you also look for combinations of letters. Those are called chunks, rimes, or phonograms. Here is a list of some of the phonograms people need to know to read English. For each phonogram, give one example from a word you know. Then list another example from the Spelling Bee list. Knowing that this chunk is part of the word will help you say it and spell it.

Chunk	My Word	Spelling Bee Word
ab		
age		
ard		
eal		
ed		
im		
ime		
ite		
on		
oon		
oth		
us		
use		

There are two open rows on the chart so you can add two more chunks.

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 ✓ complete?
 ✓ correct?
 ✓ clear?

*Exceed the Standard:
 Write what you learned by
 doing this project.*

Your Own Pronunciation Key

Look in the dictionary for the pronunciation of words you have difficulty spelling from the Spelling Bee list. On the index card you made for that word, show how you say the word. You can use the dictionary guide or make up your own. If you make up your own guide, you will use letters and chunks to show the sounds.

The pronunciation key should show how each part of the word, each syllable, sounds. A word can be one syllable long. One is just one syllable. You hear just one sound when someone says it. Syllable is three syllables. If you were to write it in chunks you could write it sil la bul.

When a consonant comes at the beginning of a chunk it's called the onset. That means that is how you start to say the word. That first letter connects its sound with the chunk to make one sound. For example, us is a word by itself. Add b and you have bus—and you hear the sound of b as the beginning, before the chunk us, but it's all one sound.

Use onsets and chunks to show the syllables. Then look again at the spelling. See which letters stand for the sounds. That is how you will hear it at the Spelling Bee.

Part 4: Meaning and Spelling

When you figure out what a word means, that can help you learn how to spell it correctly. Here are two ways to get the meaning of a word.

Word Structure

Most multi-syllable words have parts. The parts may be roots. They may be separate words joined together. They may be affixes, letters added to a word that change its meaning.

There are clues to a word's meaning in its parts. One part you will find in some words is a prefix. Pre means before. Fix means to set or change. A prefix is something you put at the beginning of a word that changes its meaning. Look in the Spelling Bee list for examples of words that have prefixes. List them and tell how the prefix changes the meaning of the word.

Another part is called a suffix. It is a set of letters added at the end of a word that changes its meaning. Care is a word that means one thing by itself. Careless is care plus a suffix that changes its meaning. Look for examples of words in the Spelling Bee list that have suffixes. List them and tell how the prefix changes the meaning of the word.

There is another part of a word that can help you figure out its meaning. It is the root. A root is the part of the word that holds the main meaning of the word. For example, view is a root word. Add re to it and it means see again--review. Add -er to it and it means someone who sees, a viewer. Suffix and prefix are both built with the same root word,

fix. Look for root words in the Spelling Bee list. Find a root word that is part of two or more other words on the list. Note it here.

Root _____

Word with this Root

What It means

Another Word with this Root

What it means

You can learn more about the words on the Spelling Bee list by looking for root words. But be very careful. Sometimes what you think is a root word is not what you guess it is. So it's best to check your guess with a dictionary.

Some words you find seem to have two roots—or more. For example, rainforest has two separate roots in it. It's a compound word, a word made from two different words that together mean something. Look through the Spelling Bee list for examples of compound words. List them and tell what the parts mean in this word they join to make.

Picturing Meaning

You think about a word's spelling and its meaning when you draw a picture to illustrate it. Actually, people used pictures to communicate long before they started to use writing. If you can draw a picture to show what a word means, you show more than a simple definition can say. For example, if you draw a picture to show what rainforest means it probably will have more information than you would find in a dictionary definition.

You don't have to draw a complicated picture. You can use stick figures to show meaning very clearly. See how easy and effective this can be. Draw a picture to show what the following word means: conflict.

Choose your top ten spelling challenges from the Spelling Bee list. These are the ten words you have the most difficulty spelling correctly. Spend time with them. First, write a short definition of each word. Then draw a picture that shows that meaning. As you spend time with the word you will learn the word, its meaning, and its spelling.

Meet the standard:
Check your work—is it
✓ complete?
✓ correct?
✓ clear?
Exceed the Standard:
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Part 5: Write with the Words

When you write with words you learn you learn their meaning and their spelling. You Here are some writing projects you can do that will help you learn the Spelling Bee words and build your writing skills.

Crossword Puzzle

Make up a crossword puzzle using words from the Spelling Bee list. First, fit the words together into a grid. Then write clues for the words. Give your clues and the blank grid to another student.

News Headline

Write a headline for a newspaper article about one of the topics in the Spelling Bee. Use at least two words from the list in your headline.

Poem

Write a poem about a topic in the Spelling Bee. Use words from the Spelling Bee list in the poem.

Story

Write a story. Use words from different parts of the Spelling Bee list in your story.

Make More Spelling Progress

Keep working on your spelling even after the Spelling Bee. The more you know, the farther you will go.

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✓ clear?

*Exceed the Standard:
Write what you learned by
doing this project.*